

Hoffecker House  
North side of State Route 6  
just west of town  
Clayton  
Kent County  
Delaware

HABS No. Del-140

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## HOFFECKER HOUSE

Location: North side of State Route 6 just west of town,  
Clayton, Kent County, Delaware

Brief Statement  
of Significance: This house is representative of the dwellings of  
prosperous farmers in Kent County, Delaware in the  
mid eighteenth century.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The Hoffecker house is a two-story-and-attic structure, three bays wide and one room deep. The house faces south. At the west side is a lower wing. Both the main house and the wing are built of brick, painted white. The house dates from about the middle of the eighteenth century.

The lower wing at the west side is set a little back from the front, and its roof is a simple slope upward to the west end-wall of the main house. This single slope roof arrangement may possibly be the result of a later alteration, made when some other small changes took place in the wing. From all interior indications, however, the wing was built at the same time as the main body of the house, where no changes have been made.

The whole house is exceeding plain. There is no belt course across the front. There is a meager and very small box cornice, and the narrow barge-boards have only the slightest flare at their lower ends.

Considering the extreme plainness of the exterior, it is somewhat of a surprise to find excellent interior woodwork and paneling. Over the fireplace of the chief room --- the "great room" --- there is a large, square, dog-eared panel as a central feature.

The plan of the house is pre-Georgian; the woodwork is Georgian. The plan, in fact, is an adaptation of the really late-Mediaeval "Resurrection Manor plan" that came up from Maryland. The "great room" (the nucleus), into which the central door of the south front opens, has the fireplace on the east side, with the stair winding up beside it to the bedroom above. The one "added" room, not very large, accounts for the one window west of the front door. Beside its fireplace is a doorway, whence steps descend into a spacious kitchen that takes up the whole ground floor space of the wing. It is obvious from the whole interior arrangement that the wing is co-eval with the rest of the house.

The plan shows the strong hold of pre-Georgian tradition in building the small farmhouse. In farmhouse design, the closed-in winding stair was a long time in giving way to the open stair with straight runs, rectangular treads and a banister, placed in a hall separate from other rooms.

The Hoffecker house is also significant as an example of the substantial and comfortable dwelling of the prosperous Kent County yeoman farmer in the eighteenth century.

The only change made to the exterior of the main part of the house was the addition of a verandah extending across most of the front --- its design plainly shows it was an "improvement" of the mid-nineteenth century.

Prepared by Harold Donaldson Eberlein  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
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